

## 5 Top Foods For Eye Health

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Do your eyes have all the nutrients they need to help prevent cataracts, macular degeneration, glaucoma and other sight woes? Read on to learn about some of the top foods for eye health. But don't count on popping a pill to get these nutrients — your best sources of vitamins and antioxidants are from whole foods, since it may be a food's combination of nutrients that have a synergistic effect.

### **Kale: See the Light**

This leafy green is a rich source of lutein and zeaxanthin, which are related to vitamin A and beta carotene, and may help protect eye tissues from sunlight damage and reduce the risk of eye changes related to aging. Other good sources of these nutrients include dark green leafy vegetables such as collard greens, turnip greens and spinach, broccoli, peas, kiwi, red grapes, yellow squash, oranges, corn, mangoes and honeydew melon. Your body needs fat to absorb lutein and zeaxanthin, so be sure to eat them with a bit of healthy fat such as a drizzle of olive oil or a few slices of avocado. And kale isn't just a one-note food — it contains vitamin C and beta carotene, other eye-friendly nutrients.

### **Sweet Potatoes: The Color of Health**

These orange tubers are a good source of beta carotene. Your body converts beta carotene to vitamin A, a nutrient that helps prevent dry eyes and night blindness. Beta carotene and vitamin A also may help reduce the risk eye infections. Sweet potatoes not your favorite? For beta carotene, try other deep orange foods, such as carrots and butternut squash, plus dark green foods including spinach and collard greens. Liver, milk and eggs are other great sources of vitamin A.

And, similar to lutein and zeaxanthin, beta carotene and vitamin A are absorbed best when eaten with a little healthy fat such as olive oil.

### **Strawberries: Help You "C" Better**

Fresh, juicy strawberries are a good thing for your eyes, and contain plenty of vitamin C, which is an antioxidant that may help lower your risk of cataracts. Also, be sure to load up your plate with other vitamin C-rich foods including bell peppers, broccoli, citrus (such as orange and grapefruit) and cantaloupe.

### **Salmon: Not Just Omega-3s**

Salmon is a good source of vitamin D, which may help protect against macular degeneration. You also can get vitamin D by enjoying sardines, mackerel, milk and orange juice fortified with vitamin D. In addition, salmon is an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids, which may be beneficial for eye health. Get some healthy fats every day in the form of salmon or other types of fish (two to three times per week), walnuts (which also contain eye-healthy vitamin E), flax and chia seeds.

### **Green Tea: Antioxidant Powerhouse**

A cup of green tea is more than relaxing and delicious — its antioxidants may help keep eyes healthy. Green tea contains healthful substances called catechins, which are responsible for its antioxidant properties. Other foods that are high in catechins include red wine, chocolate, berries and apples. Black tea also boasts catechins, but in lower amounts than its green cousin.

